

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-13 EUR-12 ACDA-12 CIAE-00
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FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7525
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
AMEMBASSY OSLO
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
USMISSION UN

C O N F I D E N T I A L DAMASCUS 1937

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PROT, MARR, UNSC, SY
SUBJ: SYRIAN ATTITUDE TOWARD SOUTH LEBANON

1. NORWEGIAN AMBASSADOR TRANCRED IBSEN TOLD CHARGE APRIL 5
HE HAD FOUND SYRIAN ATTITUDE TOWARD UNIFLI OPERATIONS IN
SOUTH LEBANON "VERY LEGALISTIC." IN SEPARATE MEETINGS WITH
MFA OFFICIALS KADDOUR AND JOUAYJATI EARLIER IN DAY, IBSEN
HAD BEEN TOLD THAT SYRIA CONSIDERED SOUTH LEBANON PROBLEM
TO CONCERN PRIMARILY LEBANON, THE PALESTINIANS AND THE UN.
SYRIA WAS ITSELF NOT DIRECTLY INVOLVED BUT NEVERTHELESS
WISHED TO SEE RAPID AND FULL ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL IN
ACCORDANCE WITH UNSC RESOLUTIONS.

2. CHARGE TOLD IBSEN HE HAD GOTTEN THE OFFICIAL LINE.
SYRIAN GOVERNMENT HAD CONSISTENTLY TAKEN POSITION THAT ADF
WAS UNDER PRESIDENT SARKIS' ORDERS AND THAT SYRIA WAS NOT
INVOLVED. WE UNDERSTOOD SIILASVUO HAD BEEN TOLD THE SAME
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THING.

3. AMBASSADOR IBSEN SAID HE HAD NEVERTHELESS FELT A
PARTICULAR SYRIAN INTEREST IN HOW THE DEPLOYMENT OF
NORWEGIAN UNIFIL TROOPS WAS PROCEEDING IN THE EASTERN SECTOR.
HE ATTRIBUTED THIS THE SYRIA'S SPECIAL MILITARY
CONCERN OVER WHO CONTROLS THE SOUTHERN APPROACHES TO THE

BEKAA VALLEY. THIS WAS OBVIOUSLY A POTENTIAL INVASION ROUTE FOR ISRAELI FORCES IN THE EVENT OF ANOTHER ISRAELI-SYRIAN WAR.

4. IBSEN SAID THAT NORWEGIAN FORCES THEMSELVES HAD UP TO THIS POINT HAD NO DIRECT CONTACT WITH PALESTINIAN GROUPS, THOUGH SUCH DIRECT COMMUNICATION MIGHT WELL BE REQUIRED IN THE FUTURE. AT THE MOMENT, NORWEGIANS CONSIDERED THEIR BIGGEST DANGER TO BE HADDAD AND HIS FORCES IN MARJAYOUN WHO COULD INTERDICT NORWEGIAN SUPPLY AND ACCESS LINES WHICH ARE ALL THROUGH THE SOUTH OR EVEN. "SHOOT US IN THE BACK." IN REPLY TO CHARGE'S QUESTION, HE SAID THAT SO FAR AS HE KNEW NORWEGIAN FORCES HAD NOT YET CONSIDERED POSSIBILITY OF SUPPLY FROM THE NORTH THROUGH THE BEKAA. IT WAS PERHAPS A POSSIBILITY BUT WOULD REQUIRE PALESTINIAN AS WELL AS ADF AGREEMENT. ANOTHER AREA OF CONCERN, HE SAID, WAS THE VERY REAL POSSIBILITY LEBANESE AND PALESTINIANS WOULD AGREE THAT PALESTINIAN PRESENCE IN LEBANON WOULD CONTINUE TO BE GOVERNED BY EXISTING ACCORDS ALL OF WHICH SPECIFICALLY ALLOWED FOR AN ARMED PALESTINIAN PRESENCE IN THE ARQOUB. WHAT WOULD NORWEGIAN FORCES DO IN THAT CASE, HE ASKED.

PELLETREAU

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